

**Sophomore Honors English
Wray**

***Of Mice and Men*
Final Essay Exam**

Please select one of the following prompts on which to write a well-developed essay. Before you begin writing, plan your approach carefully. Read all parts of the prompt and ensure you are answering all these parts. Brainstorm ideas, establishing a clear thesis in which you argue both *what* and *why*; **what is your point** and **why is it important?** Next, compose a brief outline before beginning writing. Most importantly, make sure you *use the text to support your assertions*, and *provide adequate insightful analysis of your own*.

Each of the following is a starting point – you don’t need to answer each of the questions contained within the prompt. I’m looking for insightful and original thinking, not a mere regurgitation of ideas presented in class, by your peers, or on (gasp!) Sparknotes!

Prompt One:

Several of the characters in *Of Mice and Men* are alienated due to race, age, infirmity, or otherwise. What is Steinbeck saying about alienation and how our society deals with those who are different? Why are certain characters alienated? How do they deal with it? What is the result? Ultimately, what is the point of all this?

Prompt Two:

Discuss the role of Curley’s wife in the novel. What motivates her? How does she relate to the novel’s themes? How does Steinbeck set out to characterize her? Sympathetically or unsympathetically? Does he succeed? Ultimately, why is this important? Be sure to discuss the tension she brings to the story in terms of both sexuality and conflict, as well as why Steinbeck chose to use those types of tension to **push** his action.

Prompt Three:

Compare and contrast George and Lennie. How are they similar? What are their central differences? How does Steinbeck set them up as foils, being perfectly opposite? What does each gain from the other? Why must Lennie die in the end and why must George do it? What central themes does Steinbeck develop through their comparison? Ultimately, why is this important?

Prompt Four: Relate at least one biblical theme to *Of Mice and Men*. For example: the story of Cain and Abel, the Garden, the Promised Land, or the portrayal of women as an archetype for temptation and the fall. What is the significance of Steinbeck incorporating such allusion(s) into his text? Why is this important?

Prompt Five:

A topic of your own... This is most exciting to me!